

It consists of a nave and aisles, south porch, chancel, and western tower. The tower is very elegant. 70 feet in height to the parapet, and probably about 85 to the top of the pinnacles. The church is built of the stone of the county and granite. The western doorway, and that in the porch, are handsome, though till lately covered with whitewash. The timbers of the roof are richly carved.

H. E. D.

## RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

THE functions of the Railway Commission were thus summed up in the House of Lords, the other day, by the Marquis of Lansdowne, in reply to Lord Redesdale, who questioned its utility or its weight or influence. "It examines lines newly built," said the marquis, "it inquires into accidents, regulates cheap trains, revises bye-laws, settles disputes between companies, considers colonial schemes, &c.; and though its decisions are not binding, great moral weight attaches to its opinions." No fewer than seven hundred and eighty lines had been inspected and reported on last year.—"The report of the Commissioners on Railways notices favourably a new coupling for carriages and trucks obviating the necessity of endangering life by passing between the carriages to be coupled; and also a new break, by the simple machinery of which the engine-man or guard can apply any given number of breaks that the station master may place under his command. Both of these inventions are attributed to Mr. Samuel Thornton, mechanical engineer, Birmingham. Engineers and inspectors are said to have given their 'opinion that Mr. Thornton has arrived at an improvement which has been long desired.'—Another new signal, intended to give passengers the objectionable, and, indeed, quite inadmissible power of ordering the driver to stop the train without personal consultation with the guards, has been described in the *Mechanics' Magazine*. Indeed, it has not even the merit of novelty, as it is a mere modification of the idea first of all thrown out by a lady, that tubes with mouth-pieces, should be made to communicate from every carriage interior to the ear of the driver, or the guards. Even the flexible india-rubber tubes proposed, have been already suggested, and the couplings also, down to the 'bayonet-fastening.' In place of a view-rope communication, however, such as the shrill pipe of a nervous old woman, or the impatient screech of a preposterous and hysterical shrew, which the slightest and most imaginary occasion might but too readily call forth, the still more effectual adjunct of a 'powerful whistle' is to be introduced, with instructions to the excitable passengers aforesaid to 'blow at the mouthpiece,'—a peculiar temptation (the mouthpiece we mean) to young gentlemen short of the years of discretion to 'blow away' without even the hysterical shadow of an 'occasion.' Were the result no other than the mere personal attendance of the guard, along a properly protected line of foot-boards, such a scheme would be less objectionable, and would probably be advisable; but we are surprised to find it still proposed, without such a condition, in a journal like the *Mechanics' Magazine*, that a power like this over the driver of the engine, and the movement of the train, should, by any means, or under any circumstances, be directly recorded to passengers. The impropriety, however, only proves the urgency of those many reasons which loudly call for a means of free movement to the guards or proper watchmen along the whole length of a train, the practicability of which is as unquestionable as its necessity is urgent. That even a whisper is capable of transmission through a tube of gutta serena, however, and that, too, for a length of at least several miles (!) appears to have been ascertained by Mr. F. Whishaw, late of the Telegraphic Company, and the inventor of the hydraulic telegraph, or 'Telekoupheon'; so that we are rapidly advancing towards a still closer analogy to the human 'wind-pipe' than we only half seriously suggested in the idea of transmitting written slips of paper through a telegraphic tube by help of the air-pump. Mr. Whishaw has ascertained, it appears, that a speaking telegraph, or air-telegraph as he calls it, 'would most probably prove effectual on a

length of several miles. A tune can be played on a flageolet at one end of 200 ft. of tube, by blowing in at the other, just the same as blowing into the mouth-piece. For communication between the guards and the driver he conveys one of these along the train with a whistle at one end, which calls the attention of either of them: the whistle unscrews, and they can converse and ascertain when danger occurs." This, in fact, is another version, with a more prudent application, of the very invention attributed, in the *Mechanics' Magazine*, to another. Were two separate distributions of such tubes effected (if they really be practically useful at all), one between passengers and guards, and the other between guards and drivers, probably we should have the next best arrangement, other than the simple and more practical and underangeable one so long advocated by ourselves; but the proper place of such a mode of signalling would be that in which it should be made subservient merely to the personal access of the guards to the carriages themselves; since, after all, the transmission of intimations of danger, &c., from passengers through speaking-tubes presided over by the guards would still be ever liable to risk of abuse only second to that of a direct transmission from passenger to driver.—The *Morning Herald* states, on authority, that a proposal for the reduction of drivers' wages of rather an extensive character is in contemplation. Some time ago the propriety of raising these very wages was discussed, and whatever may be the merits of that question, we fear that any attempt to reduce them will be little else than rashly tampering with the already but too precarious safety of the public, as "it is upon the general good conduct and practical knowledge of this most responsible and intelligent class of men," as the *Herald* remarks, "that the safety of the railway traveller in a great measure depends; and the directors who seek to save a thousand per annum by the reduction of a shilling or sixpence per day per driver will, in the course of a few years, find a very heavy balance against them consequent upon the damage, and perhaps—as has often been the case—loss of life, occasioned by the employment of inefficient engine-men."—A gentleman of turfite celebrity is said to have challenged the Great Western to a race of half-a-mile between his horse and one of their engines, for a stake of one thousand guineas. The match is proposed to be decided on the Reading race-course, parallel with the railway.—One hundred and sixteen thousand individuals left Manchester by railway in Whitsuntide week.—The Eastern Counties and the Bristol and Exeter Companies propose to work their branch lines with a new class of light engines, having the tender and a forty-passenger carriage on the same frame with the engine.—It appears that the Newport wooden bridge, lately destroyed by fire, is to be rebuilt not only of wood, but of the same inflammable material as before, namely, kyanized timber, of which so many others have been made on this and other lines. Thick coatings of whitening, rough cast, or other surface covering are spoken of as a preventive to be used on the reconstruction. The contractors, Messrs. Renie and Co., have resumed their work, and it has been found that the principal portion of the original structure will be still available, especially the piling, the abutments, &c.; so that it is expected that in about six months the whole will be reconstructed. The insurance company, it is said, have paid the amount insured on the structure.—The inhabitants of Bridgewater have memorialized Parliament in a petition praying for relief against the alleged illegal amount of the present fares exacted by the Great Western Company, and the augmentation of which is also in contemplation.—The London and South-Western line was announced to be opened to-day (the 30th) to Waterloo-bridge station.—On Saturday week the Blackburn and Accrington section of the East Lancashire was opened throughout.

## OAK WORK IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.—

Sir: Your correspondent on this subject should know that oak, once tampered with, can never be made to gain the mellow tint conferred by time on the carving at York Cathedral. This example, unfortunately chosen by him, never was stained at all.

WILCKE.

## Correspondence.

## MONUMENTS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Sir,—A correspondent in your last speaks the almost universal opinion of the public with respect to the monuments in Westminster Abbey. How is it then, Sir, that we hear at this present moment of a statue of Mrs. Siddons, and one other being about to be placed within its sacred walls? Is it not enough that those at present there should destroy the good effect of the building, without adding more offences against good taste and proper feeling to the number?

I am, Sir, &amp;c.

A. Z.

June 26, 1848.

## Miscellaneous.

HOUSES FOR THE POOR.—A writer in the *Edinburgh Courier* points out the eligibility, as a money investment, of providing houses for the poor. *Metastis nutandis* his remarks are as applicable to the English as the Scottish capital. "Having occasion," he says, "to call upon a poor widow in an inferior street, I had the curiosity to inquire what rent she paid for the single room she occupied. She informed me that it was 40s. I measured its dimensions, and found them to be 10 feet long by 9 wide, and 7 feet high. On my return to my own house—a flat—I found that it stood on an area of 1.775 square feet. The height of ceiling of the various flats on the stair—three in number—I found to be 13½ feet, 12 feet, and 10½ feet respectively, giving an average of 12 feet. The rents, again, are 34l., 27l., and 20l., giving an average of 27l. The cubic dimensions of the poor woman's house you will find to be 630 feet. The average cubic dimensions of one of the better houses alluded to are 21,336 feet, which, if let out at the same rate, say 40s. for 630 feet, would produce a rental of 67l. 10s.; or, deducting for the increased number of partition walls, necessary in small houses, say 60l. instead of 27l.—the present rental. Nor is this all; my landlord, at my taking possession, spent the first year's rent on painting, papering, &c.: a little whitewash is all that is necessary in the humble dwellings of the poor. I now put the simple question, could a better investment be found for money? Could a better time than the present be chosen for erecting such houses, when materials and wages are at such a low ebb?"

BOILER EXPLOSIONS.—A correspondent of the *Birmingham Journal* suggests, as 'a simple and effectual preventive,' that a steam whistle be so affixed to every boiler as to give warning of any undue pressure or risk of explosion. Although we cannot recommend such a plan as a substitute for official inspection, we think it worthy of note, and may at the same time remark, that we have seen a very ingenious contrivance, invented by Mr. Strong, who superintends the steam-press of Messrs. Cox, Brothers, in Great Queen-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields. In this case, so soon as there is any deficiency of water, or any tendency to an undue pressure of steam, the engine—or the boiler rather—very volubly rings for more water, and continues ringing, if we mistake not, till its wants are properly attended to. We may here remark, that even since our recent notice of the horrid explosion at Dudley, the necessity of Government supervision has again been fatally evidenced by the occurrence of a scarcely less destructive explosion at Preston, wherein seven more lives were lost.

SEMI-OPAQUE GLASS.—Sir: I have frequently wished that a kind of semi-opaque coloured, or white glass, were manufactured, in substitution of ground-deadened and fluted glass, to each of which there are decided objections in many respects. Now, if a semi-opaque glass were made (for windows where transparency is not wished), any tint might, I imagine, be given; and being polished on both surfaces, it would always retain its uniformity of colour, and easily be cleaned. I think that an article of this description would be exceedingly applicable to our churches of the present day, and give a beautifully subdued tone of light, that would harmonise well with the spirit of sacred edifices, and produce an effect much to be desired, when the more expensive stained glass cannot be afforded.—W. A.